

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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R 061424Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5002

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 9128

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG IS US

SUBJ: FAHMY ON ISRAELI ACTION IN ENTEBBE

1. AT ALEXANDRIA, JULY 5, FAHMY SPOKE SCATHINGLY OF "ISRAELI AGGRESSION" AGAINST UGANDA IN RELEASING THE HOSTAGES. HE HAD PUBLICLY CONDEMNED THE OPERATION AS "THEATRICAL". IT WAS WORSE THAN THAT. UN SYG WALDHEIM HAD CONDEMNED IT AS CONTRARY UNCHARTER. THE WHOLE MATTER COULD HAVE BEEN NEGOTIATED WITH THE TERRORISTS. HANNI EL-HASSAN HAD BEEN SENT BY SPECIAL EGYPTIAN MILITARY PLANE TO ASSIST. PRESIDENT FORD'S STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT HAD BEEN UNHELPFUL AND FAHMY CLAIMED HE IS UNDER INTENSE PRESSURE TO MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT TO DENOUNCE THE FORD STATEMENT.

2. I TOLD FAHMY THAT WE HAD NOT IN ANY WAY BEEN INVOLVED IN THE OPERATION AND THAT THE ISRAELIS HAD NOT INFORMED US IN ADVANCE OF IT. I WAS SURE, HOWEVER, THAT PRESIDENT FORD'S STATEMENT REFLECTED THE VIEWS OF MOST AMERICANS. WE APPRECIATED GOE EFFORTS TO SOLICIT PLO SUPPORT AND THE DISPATCH OF HANNI EL-HASSAN TO ENTEBBE, BUT IT WAS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT HANNI EL-HASSAN HAD NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO LAND. FAHMY CORRECTED THIS. EL-HASSAN HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO LAND, BUT IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS ORDERED TO LEAVE. FAHMY WAS NOT SURE WHETHER THE ORDERS HAD COME FROM THE UGANDAN GOVERNMENT OR THE TERRORISTS. I POINTED OUT THAT,
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WHOEVER GAVE THE ORDERS, THAT PARTICULAR NEGITATING

EFFORT DID NOT SEEM TO BE WORKING. THIS LEFT THE SOMALI AMBASSADOR, AND I ASKED IF HE WOULD HAVE ANY CONFIDENCE IN A SIMALI AMBASSADOR NEGOTIATING IN HIS BEHALF IN CIRCUMSTANCES SUCH AS THOSE WHICH PREVAILED. FAHMY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE WOULD NOT.

3. I TOLD HIM HE HAD TO DECIDE WHETHER TO MAKE ANOTHER STATEMENT, BUT HE SHOULD KNOW THAT ANY SUCH STATEMENT WILL SIT POORLY WITH AMERICAN CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC OPINION. I UNDERSTOOD WHY, IN AN OAU CONTEXT, HE HAD TO MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT CONDEMNING THE ISRAELI OPERATION, BUT SUGGESTED HE CONSIDER WHETHER THAT STATEMENT MIGHT NOT SUFFICE. FAHMY SAID HE WILL TRY TO AVOID ANY PUBLIC REFERENCE TO PRESIDENT FORD'S PERTINENT MESSAGE TO ISRAEL, BUT INSISTED OAU PRESSURE IS INTENSE. THE OAU WILL CERTAINLY CONDEMN THE ISRAELI ACTION AND PERHAPS CALL FOR A UNSC MEETING TO DO THE SAME. EGYPTIANS WILL SUPPORT ANY SUCH EFFORT.
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